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1997 Annual Report



ILLINOIS ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Center for Business, Community and Family Partnerships

PURPOSE OF ADULT EDUCATION ---

Adult education programs funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) serve adults ages 16 years and older who have less than a high school education and are no longer enrolled in school.

Because those who need basic education the most are usually the ones who can least afford it, the State Board funds free or low-cost adult education programs that encourage eligible adults to reach one or more of the following goals to help them learn to function more effectively in society and the workplace:

- Acquire basic reading, writing, and math skills necessary to get or advance in a job.
- Meet entrance requirements for vocational training programs.
- Prepare for the GED, a nationally recognized test for a certificate of high school equivalency.
- Attain high-level employment skills.
- Obtain the skills necessary to become a better parent.
- Acquire the skills needed to be a functional, contributing member of society and a wiser consumer.
- Learn English as a second language and citizenship skills.
- Earn high school credit toward a high school diploma.
- Obtain an alternative high school diploma.

The Illinois Adult Education Program is governed by the Illinois School Code and the Federal Adult Education Act. By law, any potential provider of adult education and literacy services (e.g., public school, community college, regional office of education, public or private nonprofit organization, community-based organization, correctional education agency, or post-secondary education institution) must be a member of a local Area Planning Council. Across Illinois, 41 councils develop and

coordinate educational programs. In many parts of the state, the Area Planning Council is the overall coordinator of all employment and training programs.

Each year, Area Planning Councils must submit plans to ISBE on or before March 1. If the area plan is approved, all providers listed in the plan can apply for funding from ISBE.

STATE REIMBURSEMENT ---

Reimbursement is based on (1) the formula mandated in the School Code for the maximum reimbursement per instructional unit (defined as 15 hours of direct instruction), (2) the approved budget, (3) actual costs and (4) the terms of distribution based on service levels as annually negotiated with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). If expenditures and student hours are sufficient, districts can claim their total approved budgets.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 1997 the formula provided the following:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) (0-8.9 reading level)—\$51.80 per unit of instruction
- Adult Secondary Education (ASE) (9.0-12.0 reading level)—\$46.62 per unit of instruction (ASE is reimbursed at 90% of ABE rate)
- Vocational skills training—\$64.75 per unit of instruction

The formula for community colleges is similar, except that colleges must deduct the state funding for ABE/ASE received through the College Board. For FY97 that rate was \$14.19 per instructional unit.

Adult education instructional program providers must apply for approval from the State Board. Each application is evaluated by a team of staff members from the State Board of Education, the Community College Board, and the Illinois De-

partment of Public Aid. Approval is based on the following criteria:

- service to target populations;
- quantifiable need in the service area;
- access to a diversity of services;
- use of effective and diverse instructional techniques;
- provision of supportive services;
- coordination with other funding sources and service providers; and
- past performance, particularly in relation to student recruitment, retention, and learning gains.

SUMMARY OF NEEDS AND PROGRAMS

Adult education and literacy programs provide instruction in the following areas: adult basic education, literacy, and adult secondary education (the latter including GED exam preparation, high school credit courses) and vocational training for entry-level employment. Other areas covered are life-coping skills, parenting skills, citizenship training for immigrants, English as a second language, job-seeking skills, and classes to prepare public assistance recipients for employment.

SAVINGS THROUGH PUBLIC ASSISTANCE REDUCTIONS

Under an inter-agency agreement with the Department of Public Aid, the State Board provides special recruitment, retention and adult education services to students receiving public assistance, primarily Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients. During FY97 16,426 public assistance students attended adult education classes meeting the minimum requirement of hours to be claimed for reimbursement. Of these students, 3,342 (20.4%) increased their earnings enough to reduce or cancel their monthly cash grants. The annual welfare savings is estimated at \$24 million, which amounts to a savings of

\$2.24 for every \$1.00 of assistance from the state. Total savings will increase as the state's medical assistance costs lower, and the tax revenue from the incomes of these former participants continue to grow.

In FY97 the State Board funded 105 administrative agencies to provide adult education. These providers served 126,142 students at over 542 sites for a total of 940,561 units of instruction:

Instruction	Units
ABE	276,472
ESL	481,925
H.S. Credit	46,357
GED Review	106,155
Vocational	29,652
Total	940,561

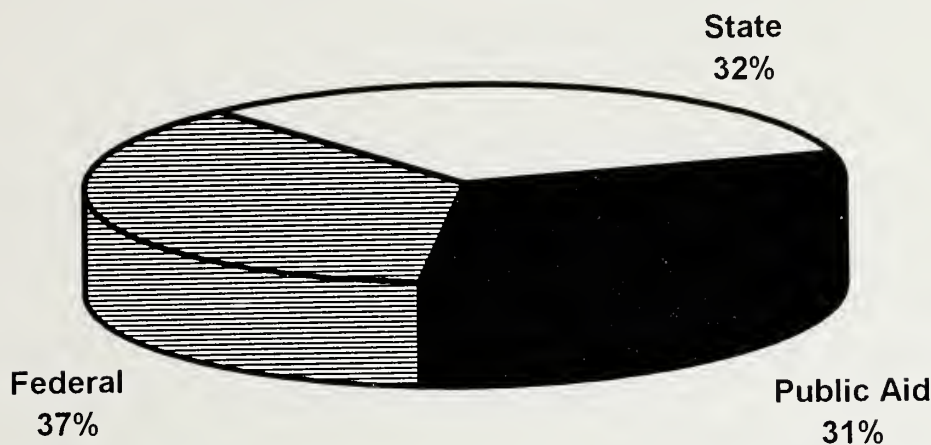
ALLOCATED FUNDS FOR FY97 BY SOURCE

FUND TYPE	\$ AMOUNT
Federal	14,277,667
State GRF	10,277,200
Public Assistance	10,068,017
State Match	1,659,900
Total	36,282,784

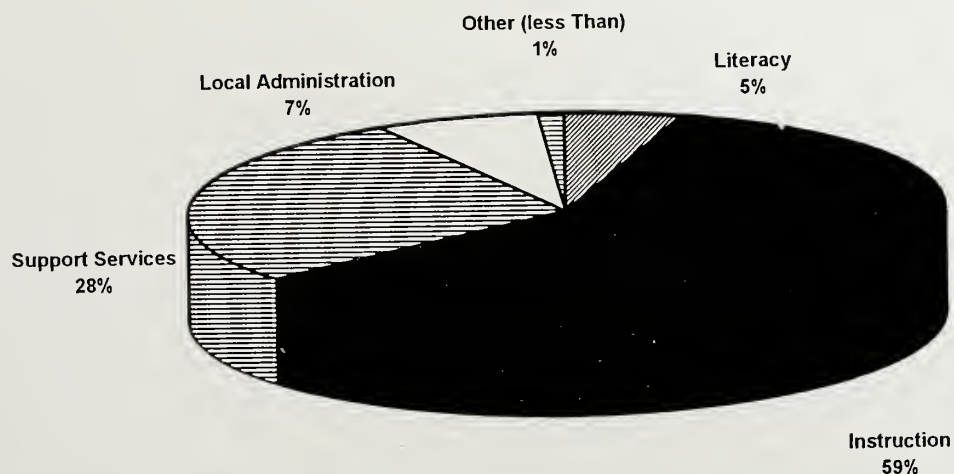
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Adult Basic Education
Adult Secondary Education
Vocational Skills Training

Fiscal Year 1997 Funding Sources



Fiscal Year 1997 Funding by Purpose (All Funds)



Student Demographics

ETHNICITY	SEX	16-20	21-24	25-44	45-59	60+	TOTAL
Asian/Pacific Islander	M	270	306	1,201	452	308	2,537
	F	323	346	2,729	849	457	4,704
Native American	M	62	44	89	13	3	211
	F	52	31	121	22	7	233
Black	M	4,089	1,929	4,760	719	117	11,614
	F	3,954	1,911	5,526	879	187	12,457
Hispanic	M	5,301	6,819	13,284	1,589	351	27,344
	F	4,334	5,052	14,826	2,399	516	27,127
White	M	5,813	1,857	5,695	1,782	1,128	16,275
	F	5,880	2,845	9,911	3,194	1,810	23,640
COLUMN TOTALS	All	30,078	21,140	58,142	11,898	4,884	126,142
GENDER TOTALS	M	15,535	10,955	25,029	4,555	1,907	57,981
	F	14,543	10,185	33,113	7,343	2,977	68,161

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS:

Issue: The adult education system in Illinois is fragmented among several state agencies. The Illinois State Board of Education is one of four agencies that deliver and support adult education in the state. The Department of Human Services, the Secretary of State's Literacy Office and the Illinois Community College Board fund and/or coordinate educational programs for adult learners. There is a tremendous need to have a systems approach to providing services to adult learners.

Recommendations: A comprehensive system of service delivery and funding can be accomplished when the various partners develop a comprehensive state plan for the delivery of adult education in Illinois.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Issue: The relationship between a skilled workforce and economic competitiveness has long been established. Studies such as *America's Choice: "High Skills or Low Wages"* pointed out that the skills and abilities of the average American worker were becoming inferior to those of workers overseas, and may be wholly inadequate for 'reengineering' firms competing in the global marketplace. In 1994, Illinois conducted a state version of the National Adult Literacy Survey. Illinois' results confirmed that many residents were not as literate as they thought they were. The results further demonstrated that the consequences of low skills in terms of employability and economic self-sufficiency were severe. Too often, individuals with low literacy skills cannot qualify for jobs with sufficient income to support themselves and their families. The challenges of upgrading and retraining the mainstream workforce became as prominent an issue as retrieving those historically left behind."¹ The

Illinois Adult Literacy Survey found that up to 44% of the adult population over the age of 16 were functioning in the lowest two literacy levels -- too low to be considered by the private sector as competitive in the workplace.

Recommendation: To fulfill the unmet literacy training demands of workers and the private sector, Illinois must devote more state resources toward adult education and literacy. In addition, the state must develop more efficient and effective methods of delivering services to adult learners.

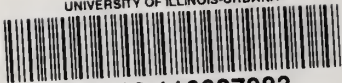
TECHNOLOGY:

Issue: Existing resources are inadequate to meet current demand through the traditional classroom. Technology can be used to reach new and underserved groups of adults, deliver effective instruction and streamline program management and communications systems. Interactive software that encourages critical thinking and allows for group learning is urgently needed.

Recommendation: Foster public/private partnerships to develop technology resources, training and professional development activities, delivery strategies and evaluation activities. Explore state and national interagency funding strategies including the leveraging of dollars horizontally and vertically throughout the state and federal government.



¹ White Paper on Local Workforce Development System coordination, Illinois Human Resource Investment Council, 1998



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Illinois State Board of Education

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